

*1" So let a man account of us, as **servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.**"*

- HE IS A “**SERVANT OF CHRIST**”
- An appointed Servant
- Greek word “hyperatai” ship rower
- **STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD**
- *Steward* means *household manager*.
- Example: Joseph in Potiphar’s house

What are these mysteries?

- They are not the unholy mysteries connected with the heathen world by which the Corinthians were surrounded.
- They are the precious truths of God, kept secret in Old Testament days, displayed in connection with Christ in glory, revealed by the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and received by believers.
- As stewards of the mysteries of God they were stewards of things that the world, as such, could not possibly comprehend.

The mysteries of God refer to the truths of the **Christian faith.**

As **(official servants)** and **stewards of God's mysteries.**

Their duty to the household of God — to furnish all the Gospel truths in due season, especially that truth which is most distinctively characteristic of the New Testament which relate to the Body of Christ.

These are not, things unintelligible, but truths reserved by God in Old Testament times, now displayed in Christ on high and made known by the Spirit in the New Testament.

² *Moreover it is required in **stewards** that one be found faithful.*

the great characteristic required in a steward is **not cleverness, nor eloquence, nor popularity, nor wisdom, nor initiative, nor success**, but “**faithfulness.**”

Men of Faith ([2 Timothy 2:2](#)). “*The things that thou hast heard of me ... the same commit thou to faithful men.*”

FAITHFULNESS CARRIES THE IDEA OF CORRECTNESS.

FAITHFULNESS CARRIES THE IDEA OF PERSISTENCE.

FAITHFULNESS CARRIES THE IDEA OF SELFLESSNESS.

The Lord's own teaching, when He spoke of the “faithful and wise steward”

(Luke 12:42 (NKJV) And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"

- A **steward** in whom faithfulness was especially required.
- The most important quality in a **steward** is that he manages **faithfully** his master's affairs, so the desires of his lord materialize.
(cf. Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 16:1-13; 19:11-27; 1 Pet. 4:10).
- **He must be faithful to his master's trust.**
- For Paul this meant remaining faithful to the gospel as he had received it and preached it (1 Cor. 15:1-11).
- God's requirement is **faithfulness**.

(NKJV) ³ But with (to) me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

- The faithfulness is in relation to the One Who appoints.
- He does **not** say that their judgment of him does not matter but is of the least importance.
- Nor does he trust in his own examination of himself.
- Paul is careful **to place the personal responsibility of the steward in direct relation to Christ.**

- ❖ Man is wholly incompetent for such an inquiry, were he even an apostle: it would be an usurpation of the functions of the Lord.
- ❖ It is of the highest importance that this immediate sense of responsibility to Christ be maintained always and everywhere.
- ❖ Whether it be a question of Paul or of Apollos, it is the same principle.
- ❖ **The church has no such authority or duty.**
- ❖ In a steward's service, in all its details as well as in principle, they are accountable alone to Christ.
- ❖ For He, and **not the church**, gave them the gift, the possession and exercise of which constitutes them His servants.

No person or office enjoys or should enjoy immunity.

- The doctrine of teachers, **if false**, would expose them to the church's judgment, and more severely than in the case of others, because of their position, perhaps even to dismiss them.
- A clearly improper use of their gift for selfish purposes might bring them under similar dealing, were the doctrine ever so sound.

Still in their service as such, apart from such evil,

- Christ's ministers are directly and exclusively accountable to Christ Himself.

⁴ For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

THREE WHO ARE UNQUALIFIED TO EVALUATE

First, fellow believers are not qualified to evaluate. This does not mean they are arrogant or irresponsible. It means human judgment is just that— human judgment.

Second, unbelievers are not qualified to evaluate. This is expressed in the reference to any human court.

Third, Paul himself is not qualified to evaluate. Paul says **his conscience is clear**. Our judgment of ourselves is still human judgment.

ONE WHO IS QUALIFIED TO EVALUATE

Final judgment can take place only before the Lord.

What did matter to him was **God's estimation of his service.**

- Paul did not give much time and attention to introspection, though he wanted to live with a good conscience before God.
- He concentrated on doing the job God had put before him to the best of his ability since he was accountable. (*1 Corinthians 3:13*)
- As far as Paul knew he was serving God faithfully.
- However, he realized that his conscience might not be as sensitive as it should be.
- Only his Master had the insight as well as the authority to judge him.

*⁵ Therefore do not go on passing judgment before **the time**, but wait until **the Lord** comes who will both **bring to light the things hidden in the darkness** and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.*

The Obligation to proper judgment 4:5

- **First**, there must be a proper **time**, 4:5a.
- **Second**, there must be a proper **judge**, 4:5b.
- **Third**, there must be a **proper knowledge**, 4:5.
- **Fourth**, there must be proper application **bring to light** 4:5.

“until the Lord come.”

- ❖ The true servant does not look for, or set great value upon, the approval of men.
- ❖ How often in the very things in which the saints praise us we may find the working of the flesh in some selfish motive for which we have to judge ourselves before the Lord.
- ❖ We are therefore to judge nothing before the time.
- ❖ Both the condemnation and praise of men may be equally at fault.

The place God will judge our lives is the **judgment seat of Christ**.

The servant will be appraised at its true value. *“Then shall every man have praise of God.”*

This does not imply that every man will be praised, *“but that every man that is praised will be praised ‘of God.’”*

Men judge by the outward appearance; the Lord takes into account
“the hidden things of darkness” and *“the counsels of the heart.”*

How many an act that now has the appearance of great
faithfulness may then be found to have been prompted by some
unworthy motive!

When Paul exhorts us to *“judge nothing before the time,”* he is **not**
speaking of the words or actions of the servants, but of **their hidden
motives.**

**“Paul lived in expectation of the imminent coming
again of Christ.”**

And so should all of us.